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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/991,381	10/22/2001	William M. Adams	00013/01UTL	2660

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EXAMINER

KOPPIKAR, VIVEK D

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3626

DATE MAILED: 08/01/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding:

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/991,381

Applicant(s)

ADAMS, WILLIAM M.

Examiner

Vivek D. Koppikar

Art Unit

3626

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 6/13/06.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Application

1. Claims 1-38 have been examined in this application. This Final Office Action is in response to the "Amendments" and "Remarks" filed on June 13, 2006.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-22, 24-27, 29-34 and 36-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent Number 6,496,804 to McEvoy in view of US Patent Number 6,634,481 to Humphrey and in further view of US Patent Number 5,832,449 to Cunningham (from the applicant's Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)).

(A) As per claim 1, a method for distributing pharmaceutical (product) drug samples, comprising the step of adjudicating a claim by a drug dispenser at a claim adjudication system for pharmacy benefit claims (McEvoy: Col. 2, Ln. 51-58 and Col. 4, Ln. 61-Col. 5, Ln. 5).

McEvoy does not teach that the product (pharmaceutical) is obtained by a token being distributed by a prescriber to permit the patient to obtain the pharmaceutical drug sample from the drug dispenser, however, this feature is well known in the art as evidenced by Humphrey (Col. 2, Ln. 18-29). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to have modified the method of McEvoy so that the products were distributed by tokens rather than by coupons with the motivation of developing a system which is better enabled to

Art Unit: 3626

account for the product samples dispersed and also able to minimize the likelihood of pilferage by persons staffing the counter or bar, as recited in Humphrey (Col. 2, Ln. 12-18). (Note: The method of McEvoy relates to any product (Col. 1, 12-20) which the examiner interprets to encompass a pharmaceutical product or a drug sample. In the method of McEvoy the redemption by the customer takes place when a customer presents a coupon, however, as taught in Humphrey this redemption of the product could also take place by the presentation of a token by a customer).

In the combined teachings of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham, the adjudication system for pharmacy benefits claims is not electronic, however, Cunningham teaches an electronic processing system to process a pharmacy benefits claim (Cunningham: Col. 12, Ln. 8-11). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the combined teachings of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham with the aforementioned from Cunningham with the motivation of providing an enhanced compensation means for pharmacies which are dispensing pharmaceutical products to patients and for providing a means for recording transactions surrounding the prescription and distribution of pharmaceutical trial products on a computer, as recited in Cunningham (Col. 3, Ln. 49-54 and Col. 12, Ln. 8-11).

(B) As per claim 2, in the combined method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham and Cunningham the step of adjudicating comprises steps of:

receiving at the claim adjudication system a request for adjudication in a first predefined format from the drug dispenser (McEvoy: Col. 4, Ln. 61-Col. 5, Ln. 5); and

Art Unit: 3626

sending to the drug dispenser an adjudication response (over a communications network) in the predefined format in response to the request for adjudication (McEvoy: Col. 4, Ln. 61-Col. 5, Ln. 15).

McEvoy does not explicitly teach that the step of receiving the request for a claim adjudication from a pharmacy and the step of sending to the pharmacy (drug dispenser) an adjudication response (e.g. payment) takes place electronically, however, Cunningham teaches that a pharmacy is communicatively linked with a central computing station that manages pharmaceutical product trials (Cunningham: Col. 4, Ln. 34-64). Cunningham further discloses the step of performing an audit and accounting function (of the pharmacy) and compensating (reimbursing) the pharmacy for the actual (amount) of pharmaceutical product dispensing (Cunningham: Col. 12, Ln. 8-11). Therefore, the examiner takes the position that the step of receiving at the claim adjudication system a request for adjudication in a first predefined format (e.g. electronic format) from the drug dispenser is within the scope of feature in Cunningham wherein the pharmacy and the central computing station communicate with each other (via a communicative link). The motivation from Cunningham for making this modification to the combined teachings of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham is the same as that set forth in the rejection of claim 1, above.

(C) As per claim 4, in the combined method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham the steps of receiving and sending are performed using a communications network for communications between a plurality of drug dispensers and a plurality of adjudicators for the electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims (McEvoy: Col. 4, Ln. 61-Col. 5, Ln. 15 and Cunningham: Col. 4, Ln. 34-64 and Col. 12, Ln. 8-11). The motivation from Cunningham for

Art Unit: 3626

making this modification to the combined teachings of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham is the same as that set forth in the rejection of claim 1, above.

(D) As per claim 5, in the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham the step of adjudicating further comprises the steps of:

receiving information about tokens that are distributed (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57);

receiving information about the token from the drug dispenser (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57); and

processing the request to provide the adjudication response using the information about tokens that were distributed, the information about the tokens from the drug dispenser, and business logic related to the token (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57).

(E) As per claim 6, in the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham the step of adjudicating further comprises a step of receiving information about the prescribers to which tokens were distributed, wherein the information about the token received from the drug dispenser comprises prescriber information, and the step of processing further comprises a step of comparing the information about the prescriber with the information about the prescriber to which tokens are distributed (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57).

(F) As per claim 7, in the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham the step of adjudicating further comprises steps of storing token usage data related to the token, and periodically providing the token usage data to enable evaluation of a pharmaceutical drug sample distribution program (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57).

(G) As per claim 8, in the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham the step of adjudicating further comprises a step of providing formulary management services and drug

Art Unit: 3626

utilization review services (Cunningham: Col. 3, Ln. 14-16). The motivation from Cunningham for making this modification to the combined teachings of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham is the same as that set forth in the rejection of claim 1, above.

(H) As per claim 9, the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham includes a step of entering information related to the token into a pharmacy benefit management system used for dispensing pharmaceutical drugs and for sending and receiving adjudication communications (McEvoy: Col. 4, Ln. 61-Col. 5, Ln. 5).

(I) As per claim 10, the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham further comprising a step of distributing tokens for delivery to prescribers (Humphrey: Col. 2, Ln. 13-30)..

(J) As per claim 11, the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham teaches a step of storing token distribution data related to the tokens, the token distribution data including prescriber information to identity prescribers to whom the tokens were distributed (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57).

(K) As per claim 12, in the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham further comprising steps of:

periodically receiving token usage data related to the token, the token usage data being generated and stored by the claim adjudication system (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57); and

correlating the token usage data with token distribution data (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57).

Art Unit: 3626

(L) As per claim 14, the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham teaches a step of accounting to the drug dispenser for the dispensing of the pharmaceutical drug sample (McEvoy: Col. 5, Ln. 15-57).

(M) As per claims 15-21, these claims repeat features previously addressed in the rejection of claims 1-14 and are rejected on the same basis.

(N) As per claims 22, 24-26, these claims repeat features previously addressed in the rejection of claims 1-14 and are rejected on the same basis.

(O) As per claims 27, 29-33, these claims repeat features previously addressed in the rejection of claims 1-14 and are rejected on the same basis.

(P) As per claims 34-36, these claims repeat features previously addressed in the rejection of claims 1-14 and are rejected on the same basis.

(Q) As per claims 37-38, these claims repeat features previously addressed in the rejection of claims 1-14 and are rejected on the same basis.

4. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham as applied to Claim 2, above, and in further view of US Patent Number 5,666,490 to Gillings.

(A) As per claim 3, the combined method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham does not teach that the step of receiving and sending are performed in accordance with a protocol for electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims, however, this feature is well known in the art as evidenced by Gillings (Claim 1, part (k)). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the combined method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham with the aforementioned feature from Gillings with the

Art Unit: 3626

motivation of improving the quality and integrity of the process of managing pharmaceutical data, as recited in Gillings (Col. 1, Ln. 65-Col. 2, Ln. 3).

(B) As per claims 23, 28 and 35, these claims repeat features previously addressed in the rejection of claims 1-14 and are rejected on the same basis.

5. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham, as applied to Claim 1, above.

(A) The combined method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham does not teach a step of prescribing the pharmaceutical drug sample for a patient using the token, however, the examiner takes Official notice that this practice is well-known in health care field. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the method of McEvoy in view of Humphrey and Cunningham by implementing the aforementioned practice with the motivation of providing a means allowing doctors (prescribers) to regulate the dispensing of prescription drugs.

Response to Arguments

6. The Applicant's arguments filed on June 13, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The applicants arguments will be addressed in sequential order as they were presented in the "Remarks" section.

(1) The Applicant argues that their application teaches a type of token which is not akin to the mechanical token of Humphrey. However, to respond to this argument, the examiner would like to point out that the claims do not require a particular type of "token" (either mechanical or electronic) and therefore the claim language reads on Humphrey.

Art Unit: 3626

(2) The Applicant argues that McEvoy in view of Humphrey does not disclose an adjudication system as the Applicant has claimed and that the coupon redemption processing of McEvoy is not electronic or performed over a communications network. However, these arguments by the applicant have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground of rejection.

(3) The Applicant argues that the term "protocol" in the Gillings reference has nothing to do with communication protocols for the electronic processing of pharmacy benefit claims. However, the examiner would like to point out that the Gillings reference is related to the pharmaceutical industry and the cited portion of the Gillings reference in the rejection above is related to the communication of information via reports and therefore the teachings cited from Gillings relate to communication protocols used in the pharmaceutical industry.

Conclusion

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Art Unit: 3626

8. Any inquire concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Vivek Koppikar, whose telephone number is (571) 272-5109. The examiner can normally be reached from Monday to Friday between 8 AM and 4:30 PM.

If any attempt to reach the examiner by telephone is unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas, can be reached at (571) 272-6776. The fax telephone numbers for this group are either (571) 273-8300 or (703) 872-9326 (for official communications including After Final communications labeled "Box AF").


Another resource that is available to applicants is the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR). Information regarding the status of an application can be obtained from the (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAX. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, please feel free to contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Sincerely,



Vivek Koppikar

7/21/2006


JOSEPH THOMAS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER